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At Price Market above 9<sup>th</sup>

In  
Inaugural Dissertation

on

Hydrocephalus Acutus.

Submitted

To the Board March 9<sup>th</sup>

Examination 1827

of the

Trustees and Medical faculty.

of the

University of Pennsylvania;

for

The Degree

of

Doctor of Medicine,

by

Samuel A. Butler.

A.D. 1826

strictly examined  
in designating  
his Medicine  
enjoyed the  
able to  
an investiga-  
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the Annals of  
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## Hydrocephalus Acutus.

This disease may be strictly ranked among those, which are designated by the title of *Oppocbia Medicorum*; and one, which has occupied the attention of some of the most able Medical Authors, and has been investigated with that accuracy of observation and minuteness of research, particularly characteristic of those, whose names stand high in the Annals of Medical Science; but the melancholly instances that occur daily, evince their labours have not been attended with success, and that its true pathology yet remains in obscurity, and we may look forward to some more fortunate, and

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perhaps American, practitioner, to immortalize himself, by establishing a true theory relative to its pathology, and a couch mode of treatment.

In the present instance I shall not presume to offer much original matter, but shall give a detail of certain facts admitted by Authors, and the most approved plan of treatment.

Though Hydrocephalus Intusus is generally divided into acute and chronic, yet in this essay I shall only consider the acute form.

The Aetiology of this disease is generally involved in considerable obscurity; frequently however it may be traced to some external injury done to the head, as from falls; blows;

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Or to some great and long continued irritation; as of dentition; pressure in the alimentary canal; collections of acid fæces, from long continued constipation; scrophulous tumours or excrescences within the skull; an original laxity or weakness in the brain, may sometimes have produced it.

It mostly attacks children; and females about commencing menstruation appear to be more subject to it, than at any subsequent period.

In fact it is rare for it to commence an attack after twelve or fourteen years of age. Professor Chapman however relates a case, which fell under his own observation, of a lady, who upon removing to the country, had caught a severe cold, about commen-

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old plant which  
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- eing, or rather at the period of menstruation; The flow was checked, and she experienced a violent attack of the disease. In children when the head has received no injury, the same professeur believes it to have, as well as most -   
 The Infantile Diseases, its origin in the prima vix; That this is highly probable, there are the strongest reasons for believing; for nothing we have done with Rush, that in the first stage, it is only a lesser degree of that action which produces Rheumatism, and in the 2<sup>d</sup>, only a lesser degree of that action which in adults, produces -   
 Apepsy; or with Darwin, that this is owing to inactivity or torpor of the absubents of the brain; yet when we ask the question, why this action

opposition  
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us at home  
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approaching Phrenitis; or why this inactivity or torpor of the absorbents is as much at a loss power and sense as we were before granting the admissions.

It is not sufficient to upbraid it in all, or in a majority of cases to "original lassitude or weakness of the brain", because we see the most robust and healthy children attacked with it; while others, where there is evidence of general lassitude and debility, pass through the several stages of Totschek and -  
Chelidhagd without having it;

but in a great majority of cases. It is probable general lassitude and debility cannot exist for a length of time, without every part partaking of it,

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But in a great majority of cases, there is no evidence of this state of the system, and consequently something more would seem necessary for its production.

It is said that those of a savagelous or victorius habit, seem more disposed to it than others, but if this be a fact, as it probably may be, it still does not argue that this habit is absolutely necessary, for its production; else we should not find it in others of a contrary habit; nor (perhaps the influence is not a fair one) should we find any who might possess this constitution escape it.

Therefore something more than necessary to account for it.

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solutely in the  
lives will do  
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invaluable, be  
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In re-  
lations, not  
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Where then shall we locate its  
origin in obscure cases? I would  
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tions will support the position in  
most cases; the state of the bonds  
being perhaps uniformly obstinately  
contracted or very irregular, and the pe-  
culiarity of the evolutions uniformly  
observable, being of a glossy and  
gum colour, with frequent exfoliations  
passing, having the appearance  
of air having been poured upon  
them, seem to show great damage-  
ment there.

In very many cases of dis-  
sections, not a vestige of diseased  
action could be discovered capable  
of producing it, except in the  
prima, sic.

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tively in

Taking it for granted then, that in perhaps a great majority of cases, its cause is to be sought after in the alimentary canal, I proceed to enumerate its symptoms:

Its progress has been divided into three stages. The first mostly commences with the usual symptoms of dyspepsia; at first the patient is dull and languid; loss of appetite or his variable; liquids coothes; abdomen turns and puffs; nausea and sometimes vomiting; eyes look dull and frequently are of a dark colour under them; the skin is observed to be hot and dry towards evening; soon after these symptoms have appeared, the patient becomes affected with sharp head-ache, chiefly in the fore part, as, if not

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offered it not  
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y state of  
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objection.

thus, generally in the crown of the head; it is sometimes however confined to one side of the head, and in such case, when the position of the body is erect, the head often inclines to the side affected; we most generally find also, that the headache abates with the affection of the stomach, the vomiting being less troublesome when the pain is most violent, and vice versa: the parts of the body are likewise subject to temporary attacks of pain, viz. the extremities, &c. the hands, but, more constantly the back of the neck.

Almost the first symptom observed in children, is a chill, soon succeeded by fits of a vomiting fever, with evening exacerbations: there is evanescence light and sound;

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to stomach a

Picking of the nose when awake:  
grinding of the teeth when asleep:

Many of these symptoms are not observable in every case; most generally the countenance of the patient is anxious and strongly expressive of distress and suffering. The temper is irritable and "fractious"; inclines to lay in bed, and be in a recumbent position, and is averse to being moved; it rolls its head from side to side, and throws its arms over it: when asleep particularly its breathing is extremely irregular, with frequent sighs; starts often and screams as if suffocated; the bowels are obstinately constipated generally, though sometimes they have a tendency to loose motions; the appearances of the discharges are remarkable, being mostly of a dark

your colour  
by different  
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way, cadaver

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symptoms he  
lost, though  
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green colour, having an oily appearance, but different from the slime which accompanies worms, with a peculiar heavy, cadaverous smell.

When the above mentioned symptoms have continued for a few days, though subject to great fluctuation, the axis of one eye is generally found turned in towards the nose; the pupil on this side is rather more dilated than the other, and when both have their axis directed inward, (which sometimes happens,) both pupils are larger than they are observed to be in the eyes of a healthy person; delirium of the most violent kind, particularly if the patient has arrived at the age of puberty, now takes place, and with all the -

feverish,  
unconscious  
two days, esp.  
of time, after  
the appearance

unconsciousness  
becomes more  
marked, the  
pulse is  
the pupils  
and do not  
bright; the  
sensitivity is  
less or too poor  
burned fingers  
much easier  
disturbed, and  
highly con-

preceding symptoms of fever, continue for a while to increase, until about fourteen days, often a much shorter space of time, after the first symptoms make their appearance.

The disease then undergoes a remarkable change, and symptoms become manifest, which point the commencement of the second stage: the pulse becomes slow and unipulse, the pupils of the eyes are dilated and do not contract upon exposure to light; there is great diminution of sensibility; the child lays in a lethargic or torpid state; starts and screams frequently, without any apparent cause; its sleep very much disturbed, and the bowels are still obstructively constipated, or else they

some very  
bold, large  
appearance;  
but, with the

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proud of its  
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the 3<sup>rd</sup> stag  
several times.

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on his head  
times red up  
the body as

become very irregular, with thin watery stools, mixed with scybala of an oily appearance: it has too, a vague wild look, with perhaps double vision.

If any artificial effort proves unavailing in exciting the sinking powers of life, then the symptoms make their appearance, which denote the 3<sup>d</sup> stage, and more certainly announce the approach of death.

In this stage the pulse returns again to its feeble state, being very quick and variable; convulsions, or something similar to chorea; jerking of the extremities; he lies in a torpid state, tossing his head on his head or sawing the air; sometimes red spots or blotches appear on the body and limbs; deglutition

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becomes difficult, and convulsions close the scene.

In this stage, there is no difficulty in discriminating it.

The only disease it can be confounded with, is *Febes ruminosa*; but they may be distinguished by several symptoms: In *rum febr* there is a remarkable alteration of the voice, with sometimes complete aphonia. This, says Professor Chapman, may serve as a diagnosis between the two affections.

In *rum febr* the exacerbation is marked by a stupor and the remission, by a morbid vigilance.

In *Hypodyscephalus*, children cannot leave the *cervix* position, if raised they scream out so peculiarly, as to have obtained it the name of -

Hydrocephalus

Dr.

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*Hydrocephalic oecum.*

In the first stages the symptoms are illusive; distinctions frequently showing not a drop of water in the ventricles of the brain, when persons have died with all or many of the symptoms characteristic of the disease; and in other cases the ventricles have been found full, when not a symptom led to suspect it.

The prognosis is generally unfavourable, as it is to be regarded as a disease of difficult cure, unless attacked promptly and decisively in the first instance.

If the patient can't bear the erect position, 'tis a bad symptom, though which may occasionally be taken for stupor: great dilatation

of pustules,  
irremovable  
difficult to  
raise; in fact  
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of pehils, and squinting are very un-  
favourable: epiplectic stupor; coma; X  
difficult respiration; weak intermitting  
pulse; involuntary evacuations, &c  
all highly unfavourable.

Post mortem examination  
Shows accumulations of water in the  
ventricles of the brain, which is very  
clear and of a pure colour, then  
that in Hydrocephaly or ascites.

Timidines containing a small  
quantity of coagulable lymph, but most  
frequently not.

When the accumulation is great,  
the substance of the brain appears to be  
a sort of pulpy bag containing a fluid.

Des Bell and Spugnini have  
frequently dissected the brain of Hydro-  
cephalic patients, and have resolved it

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nearly resembles a cloth bunched up together, and by careful dissection may be drawn out in form of a bag; and hence in Chronic Hydrocephalus, where the brain appears desiccated, it is only measured of its convolutions, and in that state is so capable of performing its functions, as when in its ordinary state.

It is stated as a curious fact, that Hydrocephalic patients retain their sense and powers of mind equally well as in health.

In some cases, when the collection is not great, the substance of the brain appears hard and indurated, in others soft; the veins on the surface of the membranes of the brain, and on those lining the ventricles are gauged with dark blood; with thickening of the arteries.

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apparatus so  
and congested.

Attack  
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stage, it may  
have authority  
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Edinburgh,  
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Hospitality,  
mult; If you  
it applied.  
face, they are

and extensive adhesions; the chyle-paths  
are generally found inflamed  
and congested &c.

Attacking the disease with bold  
cures and promptness, in the incipient  
stage, it may generally be cured, though  
some authors maintain it to be a most  
intractable disease; and Dr Monroe,  
of Edinburgh, assures us he has not  
been so fortunate as to cure it in a  
solitary instance; and on the contrary,  
authors of equally high authority,  
consider it one of the most liable  
diseases.

The explanation of this dis-  
easiness, perhaps, may, not be dif-  
ficult; If remedial measures are  
not applied until effusion has taken  
place, they must fail of curing it.

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But if attacked previous to offend having taken place, we may prevent it, and in most cases cure the disease.

Vomition is most frequently resorted to in the commencement, but by some is considered inferior to purging; the plan recommended, is to keep up a constant action of the bowels, by the exhibition of calomel and Salap day after day, or as some prefer, give calomel at night, and purge it off next morning, with some other active cathartics; though in conjunction with cathartics, blood-letting ought not to be neglected, when increased arterial action exists, with throbbing of the temporal arteries, and should be aided, by cups and baths and cold applications, and likewise

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the application of a blister all over  
the head and kept me for twenty four  
or thirty six hours.

Crotal's by some are spoken  
favourable of, and in some cases are  
said to be an important remedy; but  
they require some discrimination in  
their exhibition: where there is throbbing  
of the temporal arteries, or evidently  
a violent determination to the head,  
they are altogether inadmissible.

After the disease has continued  
for some time, it is not uncommon  
for the symptoms to mitigate, so as  
to give hopes of recovery; but this is  
a fatal calm; effusion has now  
taken place, and consequently hemi-  
plegia, mostly fatal.

Murcay is now only

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to be depended upon, and may  
be given internally and emitted by  
therapeutically, and under this plan of treat-  
ment, some patients have been cured  
when every evidence of effusion having  
taken place, has been manifest.

Professor Chapman in conjunc-  
tion with the late Dr Huguenin, succeeded  
in curing a child, when every symptom  
of the last stage of the disease had  
made its appearance, by introducing  
mercury into the system to a modest  
salivation, though it required an  
influence quantity to obtain the end.

And in conjunction with  
the late Dr Thistel, he succeeded in  
another case, by the same treatment.

But he justly observes that  
such a plan is only justifiable in

situations  
inevitably  
fluctuation of  
the disease  
is buying us  
uncharities,  
in the absence  
must be a  
reality of  
since the  
I confess in  
it is even

the History  
disease, and  
that the disease  
pathology,  
& Constitution  
absorption

extreme cases, where death must  
inevitably take place without the ap-  
plication of the remedy.

What would be the effect of  
purging with some of the most drastic  
cathartics, and producing an irritation  
in the alimentary canal, amounting  
almost to inflammation? By lessening  
a centre of fluxion, it would probably  
relieve the vessels of the head: but  
I confess it wants confirmation,  
as it is with me a mere suggestion.

I shall now conclude —  
the history and treatment of this  
disease, and shall only further observe,  
that the views I have taken of its  
pathology, I derived from the Puffen  
of Hospitals; and, from a hasty  
examination of medical authors,

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have adopted it, as the most reasonable  
theory, and according best with the  
present received doctrine of disease.



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Cyrus